

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 7-15 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended to incorporate claim 6, and claims 5 and 6 are cancelled. Claims 7 and 8 have been amended to correct dependency.

No new matter is added by this Amendment. Support for the language added to claim 1 can be found in original claim 6.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant notes with appreciation that the subject matter of claim 6 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim. Accordingly, Applicant has amended claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 6.

As such, Applicant submit that claim 1, and claims 2-5 and 7-15 which are dependent from claim 1, are now in condition for allowance.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Claims 1 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0156329 ("Wilkinson"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed above and as acknowledged by the Patent Office, Wilkinson does not teach or suggest the features recited in original claim 6. Therefore, claim 6 has been incorporated into claim 1.

Applicant submits that this rejection is now moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

II. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Various claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as follows: claims 2 and 3 relying upon Wilkinson in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,743,090 ("Reidinger"); claims 5 and 7

relying upon Wilkinson in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,439,621 ("Hoopman"); claim 8 relying upon Wilkinson in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,626,410 ("Chambers"); claims 9-12 and 14 relying upon Wilkinson in view of Hoopman and Chambers and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,846,098 ("Bourdelaïs"); claim 15 relying upon Wilkinson in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,637,888 ("Haven"); and claim 13 relying upon Wilkinson in view of Hoopman, Chambers, Bourdelaïs, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,781,342 ("Hannon").

As discussed above and as acknowledged by the Patent Office, neither Wilkinson nor any of the cited references, in combination or alone, teaches or suggests the features recited in original claim 6. Therefore, claim 6 has been incorporated into claim 1.

Applicant submits that all of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are now moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-4 and 7-15 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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